

**REMARKS**

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 21-24, 26-33, and 36-40 are pending. Claims 1-20, 25, 34, and 35 were previously cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein. Claim 21 is amended, and claims 39 and 40 are added. Claim 21 is independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

**Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §103(a)**

Claims 21, 23, 28, 30, 32, 33, and 38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bonk et al. (U.S. 4,731, 273);

Claims 21 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Woods (U.S. 4,414,275);

Claims 21, 24, 26, and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Komiyama et al. (U.S. 5,118,567);

Claims 21 and 31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Polski et al. (U.S. 5,599,601); and

Claim 29 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bonk et al. in view of Lautenschlaeger et al. (U.S. 4,814,215).

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, independent claim 21 has been amended herein to recite a combination of elements directed to a pressure-sensitive adhesive material or a sealing material which has a three-dimensional structure and a defined cross-sectional contour, including *inter alia*

“wherein said material is present in a form of strings, strands or strips having a round, semicircular, oval, elliptical, triangular, quadrangular, polygonal or irregular cross-sectional contour and a thickness of 0.5 to 50 mm”.

Support for the novel features of claim 21 can be found, for example, on page 10, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph of the original specification.

The Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 21 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Bonk et al., Woods, Komiyama et al., and Polski et al.

In contrast to the present invention, the references cited by the Examiner neither teach nor indicate that a pressure-sensitive adhesive is manufactured in a form of strings, strands, or strips having a round, semicircular, oval, elliptical, triangular, quadrangular, polygonal or irregular cross-sectional contour and a thickness of 0.5 to 50 mm”.

Differences between the present invention as set forth in independent claim 21 and the references cited by the Examiner include at least the following:

In a response to a previous Office Action filed on July 2, 2007, the Applicants agreed to the Examiner's opinion that adhesive strings, strands or strips have a three-dimensional structure. For the Examiner, this implies that said strings, strands or strips inherently have a defined rectangular cross-sectional contour. However, the Applicants submit that this does not necessarily mean that the cross-sectional contour is quadrangular or polygonal, let alone round, semicircular, oval, elliptical, triangular and irregular cross-sectional contours. Therefore, the Examiner's conclusion that "the prior art reads on at least two of the variants claimed and thus the claim as a whole is rendered unpatentable" cannot be agreed to. The Examiner has not shown that a rectangular cross-sectional contour is a feature that is common to adhesive strings, strands, and strips disclosed in the cited references.

The pressure-sensitive adhesive material of the present invention differs from conventional adhesive materials, in that the strings, strands, or strips of the present invention are significantly thicker than conventional adhesive layers or transfer tapes such as those illustrated by Bonk et al. Bonk et al. teach cross-linked pressure sensitive adhesives in form of adhesive layers that are coated on parts of a sheet. Hence, Bonk et al. imply that what is defined in the present application is planar or flat.

To better distinguish the present invention from the planar or flat adhesive layers as, for instance, disclosed by Bonk et al. or Woods, the Applicants have incorporated the thickness (0.5 to 50 mm) of the strings, strands, and strips of the inventive material into independent claim 21.

Accordingly, the subject matter of independent claim 21 is both novel and non-obvious, because the cited references do not teach pressure-sensitive adhesive materials in form of strings, strands, or strips having a round, semicircular, oval, elliptical, triangular, quadrangular, polygonal, or irregular cross-sectional contour, and a thickness of 0.5 to 50 mm.

Materials of such geometries and thickness can only be produced by the process disclosed in the present application, and not by the processes described in cited references. None of the cited references could have made strings, strands, or strips having a round, semicircular, oval, elliptical, triangular, quadrangular, polygonal, or irregular cross-sectional contour which have a thickness of 0.5 to 50 mm obvious to the skilled artisan at the time the present invention was made.

At least for the reasons described above, the Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 21 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Bonk et al., Woods, Komiyama et al., and Polski et al.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

Independent claim 21 is in condition for allowance.

**Dependent Claims**

The Examiner will note that dependent claims 39 and 40 have been added.

All dependent claims are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claims, as well as for the additional novel limitations set forth therein.

All claims of the present application are now in condition for allowance.

**CONCLUSION**

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 208-4030 (direct line).

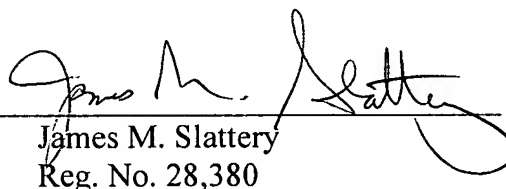
If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By

  
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